



LOWELL SCHOOL COMMITTEE

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Date:	October 20, 2021
Time:	6:30PM
Location:	City Council Chamber, 375 Merrimack Street, 2nd Floor, Lowell, MA 01852

1. SALUTE TO FLAG

2. ROLL CALL

On a roll call at 6:33 p.m., members present were, namely: Ms. Doherty, Mr. Lay, Ms. Martin, Ms. Clark, Mr. Descoteaux and Mr. Dillon. Mayor Leahy was absent.

3. SPECIAL ORDER OF BUSINESS

Ms. Doherty made a motion to suspend the rules to take the agenda out of order; seconded by Ms. Clark. 6 yeas, 1 absent (Mayor Leahy) APPROVED

4. MINUTES

4.1. Approval of the Minutes of the Special Meeting of the Lowell School Committee of Monday, October 4, 2021

Ms. Martin and Ms. Doherty stated that they were looking for the report that tracks the 394 students that were in question at the September 23, 2021 meeting around placement. Ms. Martin stated that she wasn't aware she needed to, but if needed she will make it in the form of a motion that a report was expected. Ms. Doherty stated she was also very upset and was expecting answers at this meeting and wants the public to get answers as well.

Superintendent Boyd stated that Ms. Doherty could have called him and he could have provided that information to her. He stated that this is not unprecedented and that it happened in 2019 as well.

Ms. Doherty responded and stated that she wants to go on the record that she is very frustrated with the lack of information and that information needs to be given to the full Committee at the School Committee meetings according to open meeting law.



Mr. Dillon asked to go on the record as well saying he believes that this is not an unprecedented event and this is a scenario that can happen sometimes and he believes it happens yearly in this district and that we have several reasons why the number is what it was.

Mr. Dillon made a motion to accept and place on file the minutes from the Regularly Scheduled and the Special School Committee Meetings of Monday, October 4, 2021 and Wednesday, October 6, 2021; seconded by Mr. Lay. 6 yeas, 1 absent (Mayor Leahy) APPROVED

4.2. Approval of the Minutes of the Meeting of the Lowell School Committee of Wednesday, October 6, 2021

Ms. Martin and Ms. Doherty stated that they were looking for the report that tracks the 394 students that were in question at the September 23, 2021 meeting around placement. Ms. Martin stated that wasn't aware she needed to, but if needed she will make it in the form of a motion that a report was expected. Ms. Doherty stated she was also very upset and was expecting answers at this meeting and wants the public to get answers as well.

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Mr. Dillon made a motion to accept and place on file the minutes from the Regularly Scheduled and the Special School Committee Meetings of Monday, October 4, 2021 and Wednesday, October 6, 2021; seconded by Mr. Lay. 6 yeas, 1 absent (Mayor Leahy) APPROVED

5. PERMISSION TO ENTER

5.1. Permission to Enter: October 20, 2021

Mr. Dillon made a motion to approve the Permission to Enter; seconded by Ms. Doherty. 6 yeas, 1 absent (Mayor Leahy) APPROVED

5.2. Contract Ratification: UTL Teachers

Ms. Clark made a motion to approve the Contract Ratification: UTL Teachers; seconded by Ms. Martin. 5 yeas, 2 absent (Mayor Leahy, Mr. Descoteaux) APPROVED



5.3. Contract Ratification: UTL Paraprofessionals

Ms. Clark made a motion to approve the Contract Ratification: UTL Paraprofessionals; seconded by Mr. Dillon. 5 yeas, 2 absent (Mayor Leahy, Mr. Descoteaux) APPROVED

5.4. Contract Ratification: UTL Building Service Employees

Mr. Lay made a motion to approve the Contract Ratification: UTL Building Service Employees; seconded by Ms. Martin. 5 yeas, 2 absent (Mayor Leahy, Mr. Descoteaux) APPROVED

5.5. Contract Ratification: UTL Food Service Employees

Ms. Martin made a motion to approve the Contract Ratification: UTL Food Service Employees; seconded by Mr. Dillon. 5 yeas, 2 absent (Mayor Leahy, Mr. Descoteaux) APPROVED

6. MOTIONS

6.1. [By Dominik Hok Lay and Andy Descoteaux]: Request the Mayor provide the School Committee with an update on City Council's planned investment in capital projects at school facilities over the course of the current fiscal year and the next two fiscal years (beyond the current and planned slate of MSBA applications and the School Committee's earmarked ESSER funds) to enable the Committee to more effectively plan for the allocation of ESSER funds.

Paul Georges registered to speak and spoke on this motion.

Ms. Doherty stated that there will be a joint School Committee & City Council Facilities Subcommittee meeting to discuss this.

Mr. Lay, maker of the motion requested that we receive information regarding the full amount of money the city will be contributing before moving forward.

Mr. Lay made a motion to approve; seconded by Mr. Descoteaux. 6 yeas, 1 absent (Mayor Leahy) APPROVED

6.2. [By Connie Martin]: Request a report from the Special Ed Department on the current status of pending Initial IEP meetings with parents as well as the status of pending annual review meetings for existing IEPs.

Ms. Doherty withdrew her motion below that stated "Request the Superintendent provide the committee with a report explaining the lack of interpreters for Special Education and the steps being taken to address the issue", but requested that the information in the motion be included in the report that will be provided under this motion.

Ms. Martin made a motion to approve; seconded by Ms. Doherty. 6 yeas, 1 absent (Mayor Leahy) APPROVED



6.3. [By Jackie Doherty]: Request the Superintendent provide the committee with a report explaining the lack of interpreters for Special Education and the steps being taken to address the issue.

Ms. Doherty withdrew this motion, but did make a substitute motion to address contracts and the reason for the lack of interpreters.

Ms. Doherty made a substitute motion to schedule a Finance Subcommittee meeting and invite the stakeholders from the City to discuss the contract process; seconded by Mr. Dillon. 6 yeas, 1 absent (Mayor Leahy) APPROVED

6.4. [By Jackie Doherty]: Request the Superintendent collaborate with school and city stakeholders to provide the committee with ongoing information/updates regarding the percentage of Lowell Public School employees and students who have received COVID-19 vaccinations.

Ms. Doherty made a motion to approve; seconded by Ms. Martin. 5 yeas, 1 nay (Mr. Dillon), 1 absent (Mayor Leahy) APPROVED

6.5. [By Andy Descoteaux]: Request the administration provide the School Committee what the number of students that suddenly appear at our doorstep from October 1 to November 1 who will not be counted in our Chapter 70 coverage.

Mr. Descoteaux made a motion to approve; seconded by Mr. Dillon. 6 yeas, 1 absent (Mayor Leahy) APPROVED

6.6. [By Andy Descoteaux]: Request the administration review the adherence of our school Principals relating to the School Committee's strong support of recess NOT being used as a form of punishment.

Mr. Descoteaux made a motion to approve; seconded by Ms. Martin. 6 yeas, 1 absent (Mayor Leahy) APPROVED

6.7. [By Andy Descoteaux]: Request that the administration re-assess the food quality offerings at our city schools.

Ms. Clark asked about the possibility of forming a Student Committee to discuss the quality of the food from Aramark.

Mr. Descoteaux made a motion to approve; seconded by Mr. Lay. 6 yeas, 1 absent (Mayor Leahy) APPROVED

7. REPORTS OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

7.1. COVID-19 Update

Dr. Hall, Chief Operating Officer gave the Committee a COVID-19 Data monitoring update that included Lowell Public Schools COVID positive cases, Pool Testing Participation and Testing Services (symptomatic



testing, “test and stay” and routine COVID Pooled testing). The report also spoke about the process the district follows when a pool test is positive and also provided general updates.

It was requested that the number of staff members who have had to quarantine should also be included in the report.

Ms. Doherty made a motion to accept the following Reports of the Superintendent 7.1 through 7.4.2 as reports of progress; seconded by Mr. Dillon. 6 yeas, 1 absent (Mayor Leahy) APPROVED

7.2. SY2021-2022 Strategic Goals, Actions and Deliverables

Superintendent Boyd provided the Committee with his strategic goals, actions and deliverables for the District for the 2021-2022 academic and fiscal year. He stated that his goals are aligned with the district’s overarching strategic plan and the actions that are presented are designed in measurable terms for discussion purposes and to finalize a collective path forward as an organization during this current school year. He stated that he would like to stay consistent with the district’s multi-year strategic plan and focusing on the four (4) goal areas for SY2021-2022 which are as follows:

- Improve academics and student achievement at every school site;
- Improve operational efficiency across the system;
- Ensure that every school is safe and welcoming to every student and every family; and
- Increase community engagement and empower families as partners in the educational process.

He also stated that the Key Performance Indicators are monitored internally as we work through a process of continuous improvement and reviewed publicly with the Committee on a quarterly basis. Superintendent Boyd thanked the Committee for their advice, guidance and support and he appreciates feedback.

Ms. Doherty made a motion to accept the following Reports of the Superintendent 7.1 through 7.4.2 as reports of progress; seconded by Mr. Dillon. 6 yeas, 1 absent (Mayor Leahy) APPROVED

7.3. Hiring Report for SY22

Dr. Hall, Chief Operating Officer informed the Committee that in SY22 the personnel that has been hired by Principals and Supervisors and processed through the HR office are as follows:

- 156 Teachers
- 138 Paraprofessionals
- 35 Unaffiliated personnel
- 34 LSAA personnel
- 152 Tutors

He stated that currently, there are three (3) teacher vacancies and three (3) paraprofessional vacancies, as approved by the Lowell School Committee in last week’s meeting, HR also posted ten (10)



paraprofessional positions to serve as substitute teachers in Renaissance Schools to help address the substitute teacher shortage.

Ms. Doherty made a motion to accept the following Reports of the Superintendent 7.1 through 7.4.2 as reports of progress; seconded by Mr. Dillon. 6 yeas, 1 absent (Mayor Leahy) APPROVED

7.4. Report on Motions

Superintendent Boyd provided the Committee with an updated report on the status of outstanding motions and asked the Committee if they had any concerns or questions.

Ms. Doherty stated that on page 6, #2 (Exit Interviews – STEM) the motion is not completed and the status is incorrect.

Ms. Doherty made a motion to accept the following Reports of the Superintendent 7.1 through 7.4.2 as reports of progress; seconded by Mr. Dillon. 6 yeas, 1 absent (Mayor Leahy) APPROVED

7.4.1. Response to Motion 10. COO of 09/01/21 By Mayor John Leahy Regarding Water Dispensers/Fountains Analysis

This report was tabled to the next School Committee meeting when Mayor Leahy will be present.

7.4.2. Response to Motion 4. CAO of 10/06/21 By Mike Dillon Jr. Regarding School Resource Officers

Ms. Desmond, Chief Academic Officer provided the Committee with a report that informs them that currently, three (3) School Resource Officers (SROs) and a District Supervisor are stationed at Lowell High School. During the 2020-2021 school year, three (3) SROs and a District Supervisor supported Lowell Public Schools (LPS); however, site placement varied due to a limited number of students on campus as a result of the COVID 19 pandemic. During the 2019-2020 school year, two (2) SROs and a District Supervisor were stationed at Lowell High School and four (4) SROs supported elementary and middle schools across the district. At this time, LPS staff and the Lowell Police Department are collaborating to develop solutions to support additional SRO support to the elementary and middle schools across the district and that additional information will be provided to the School Committee at a future meeting.

Mr. Dillon and Mr. Descoteaux asked about possibly using security guards.

Superintendent Boyd stated that it's not the same as having the Police there.

Ms. Doherty made a motion to accept the following Reports of the Superintendent 7.1 through 7.4.2 as reports of progress; seconded by Mr. Dillon. 6 yeas, 1 absent (Mayor Leahy) APPROVED



7.5. Home Education

Superintendent Boyd recommended that the following parents/guardians be allowed to home educate their child:

Beth Conlee
526 Western Avenue, Until 7

Taisa Foss Moura
174 Baldwin Street

Zenub Kakli
52 Miriam Lane

Toni-Marie Eaton
7 Schaffer Street

Jaunita Green
93 London Street

Ms. Clark made a motion to approve; seconded by Mr. Dillon. 6 years, 1 absent (Mayor Leahy) APPROVED

8. NEW BUSINESS

8.1. Vote to Accept a Donation of \$120,579.60 from Ocean State Job Lot Charitable Foundation

Dr. Hall, Chief Operating Officer informed the Committee that Ocean State Job Lot Charitable Foundation of 375 Commerce Park Road, North Kingston, RI 02852, pending acceptance by the Lowell School Committee, wishes to donate PPE to the Lowell School Department, which includes 5,184 8oz bottles of hand sanitizer, 18,144 boxes of alcohol wipes, and 312 Plexiglass shields. The total value of this donation is \$120,579.60.

Ms. Doherty made a motion to accept a donation of \$120,579.60 from Ocean State Job Lot Charitable Foundation; seconded by Ms. Clark. 6 years, 1 absent (Mayor Leahy) APPROVED

8.2. Vote to Accept a Donation of \$750.00 from Youth and Climate Change Initiative

Dr. Hall, Chief Operating Officer informed the Committee that the Youth and Climate Change Initiative is donating \$750 for the professional development of Lowell Public School (LPS) teachers. This funding will train twenty-five (25) LPS sixth grade teachers on a new science unit focused on impacts of climate change on the local environment. During this unit, students will gather data on the timing of budburst of their schoolyard trees and compare it with historical data to note that trees are leafing out earlier than in past years. The students will consider the broader impacts to our local ecosystems.

Ms. Doherty made a motion to accept a donation of \$120,579.60 from Ocean State Job Lot Charitable Foundation; seconded by Ms. Clark. 6 years, 1 absent (Mayor Leahy) APPROVED



9. ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Martin made a motion to adjourn at 8:35 p.m.; seconded by Ms. Doherty. 6 yeas, 1 absent (Mayor Leahy) APPROVED

Respectfully submitted,

**Joel D. Boyd, Ed.D., Superintendent and
Secretary to the Lowell School Committee**

JDB/mes